

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJ: SYRIAN PRESS REACTION TO SECDEF SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS

1. MAY 19 AL-BAATH REPORTED DEFSEC SCHELSINGER'S REMARKS UNDER TITLE "SCHLESINGER: WE WILL USE FORCE IN THE AREA IF OUR INTERESTS ARE EXPOSED TO DANGER." ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE QUOTED SCHLESINGER AS SAYING THAT U.S. COULD NOT TOLERATE NEW OIL EMBARGO AND WOULD NOT LIMIT ITS RESPONSE TO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS ALONE BUT "WOULD GO BEYOND THAT INTO MILITARY FIELD.Z

2. MAY 20 AL-BAATH CARRIED ARTICLE IN WHICH COLUMNIST HISHAM SHISHAKLI CLAIMED THREATS WERE PART OF AMERICAN CAMPAIGN TO SAVE FACE AFTER INDOCHINA DEFEATS. ALTHOUGH SCHLESINGER "KNOWS" ARABS NO LONGER TAKE THREATS TO USE FORCE SERIOUSLY, HE STILL TRIES TO INTIMIDATE THOSE ARABS WITH "WEAK NERVES" AND PREPARE "POLITICAL CLIMATE" FOR SUBSEQUENT CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS.

"APPARENTLY THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SADAT-FORD MEETING AT SALZBURG REQUIRED AN ESCALATION IN SCHLESINGER'S LANGUAGE OF VIOLENCE." COLUMNIST CONCLUDED THAT "AMERICA STILL ATTEMPTING DEAL WITH ARABS USING PRE-OCTOBER MENTALITY," IGNORING ITS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED INTENTIONS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ARABS.

3. BOTH PAPERS MAY 21 FRONT-PAGED MAHMUD RIAD STATE-
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MENT THAT SCHLESINGER'S THREATS WERE INTENDED TO

SCARE ARABS.

4. COLUMNIST MUHAMMAD MANSUR IN MAY 21 AL-BAATH
OPINED THAT SCHLESINGER'S COMMENTS PART OF "CAMPAIGN
OF INTIMIDATION" LAUNCHED BY "ZIONIST AND IMPERIALIST
FORCES" AGAINST ARAB GOALS OF LIBERATION OF OCCUPIED
TERRITORY AND RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.
MANSUR STATED DEFSEC'S REMARKS MORE SEVERE THAN THOSE
OF FORD AND KISSINGER. MANSUR CONCLUDED THAT "THESE
AGGRESSIVE STATEMENTS BY SCHLESINGER WILL NOT CON-
TRIBUTE TO CREATION OF INTERNATIONAL ATMOSPHERE
PERMITTING ESTABLISHMENT OF JUST AND DURABLE PEACE BUT
WILL AUGMENT SHARPNESS OF TENSION AND POSSIBLE RETURN
TO COLD WAR."
MURPHY

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